



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

FOR US POSTAL SERVICE DELIVERY:

Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare
Rockledge One, Suite 360
6705 Rockledge Drive B MSC 7982
Bethesda, Maryland 20892-7982
Home Page: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/olaw.htm>

FOR EXPRESS MAIL:

Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare
Rockledge One, Suite 360
6705 Rockledge Drive
Bethesda, Maryland 20817
Telephone: (301) 496-7163
Facsimile: (301) 402-7065

March 2, 2022

Re: Animal Welfare Assurance
A3514-01 [OLAW Case U]

David Amberg, Ph.D.
Vice President for Research
SUNY Upstate Medical University
505 Irving Avenue
Syracuse, NY 13210

Dear Dr. Amberg,

The Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) acknowledges receipt of your February 18, 2022, letter reporting an adverse event at SUNY Upstate Medical University. According to the information provided, OLAW understands that an infant marmoset died from an apparent strangulation after the animal's head became entrapped in a small hole between the layers of fabric in the middle tier of a 3-tier enrichment hammock. The "Triple Bunkbed Hammocks" which appeared to have contributed significantly to the animals' well-being was originally designed for ferrets and have been used as part of the marmoset enrichment program for the last 3 years without incident. However, the middle tier of this hammock made it difficult to identify the hole in the material or adequately evaluate all animals, most notably the very small ones hiding between tiers. There were no adverse effects on the remaining two adult parents and two infants who were housed within the same enclosure.

The corrective actions consisted of removing all 3-tiered hammocks from circulation and using single or two-tiered hammocks exclusively for marmoset enrichment. Staff are being retrained to identify holes in the fabric of the hammocks and will discard any hammock identified with a hole greater than 2 cm.

The establishment and application of policies and practices that are consistent with the provisions of the PHS Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals at SUNY Upstate Medical University are commendable and avoid the perception of a double standard. We appreciate having been informed about this matter and find no cause for further action by this Office.

Sincerely,
Neera V.
Gopee -S

Digitally signed by Neera V.
Gopee -S
Date: 2022.03.02 11:59:48
-05'00'

Neera V. Gopee, DVM, PhD, DACLAM, DABT
Associate Director, Animal Welfare Policy
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare
National Institutes of Health

cc: IACUC Chair
Robert M. Gibbens, D.V.M., USDA-APHIS-AC

February 18, 2022

Axel Wolff, M.S., DVM
National Institutes of Health
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare
RBL1, Suite 360
6705 Rockledge Drive, MSC 7982
Bethesda, MD 20892-7982

Dear Dr. Wolff,

I am writing to inform you of a recent incident that occurred in our marmoset colony. A 2-month-old infant marmoset was found dead by the care staff on 2/14/22 from what appears to be a strangulation inside of a hammock, which had been provided for enrichment. This infant was born on 12/10/2021 as a triplet and all 3 infants survived. The family consisting of the adult male, female, and triplets were housed as a group in a single enclosure. As a part of our regular enrichment program, a "Small Animal Warm Plush Triple Bunkbed Cage Hanging Hammock Bed", which is a 3-tier hammock designed for ferrets was hung from the top of the enclosure using clips. It appears that this infant's head became entrapped in a small hole between the layers of fabric of the middle tier of the hammock and was unable to back out, which likely led to strangulation. The adult parents and the other 2 infants in the cage were not affected and are doing well.

As part of our marmoset enrichment program, the animals have been provided either "Luxury Double Bunkbed Hammocks" or "Triple Bunkbed Hammocks" for the last 3 years. They use the hammocks extensively both for sleeping at night as well as a hiding spot in the daytime. We strongly believe that these hammocks contribute significantly to their well-being. Unfortunately, the middle tier on the 3-tier model made it difficult to both identify the hole in the material or to be able to adequately evaluate all animals (especially the very small young hiding between tiers). To minimize the chance of such an event reoccurring, we have removed all 3-tier hammocks from circulation and, going forward, we will only use single or 2-tiered hammocks as an enrichment for our marmosets. Two-tiered hammocks provide better visibility to examine animal well-being compared to the 3-tiered hammocks. Our colony has approximately 45 animals at this time and over the 3 years we've been using these enrichment devices, we've never had an incident like this. We are also re-training all staff on active identification of holes in the fabric of hammocks and will discard any with a hole of more than 2-cm diameter. We believe these steps should help prevent any such animal loss in the future.

Please let me know if you have any questions concerning this incident and we would be happy to address them.

Sincerely,

(b) (6)

David Amberg, Ph.D.
Vice President for Research
Institutional Official

xc:

(b) (6)

Dr. Elizabeth Goldentyer, Director of Animal Care, USDA

Wolff, Axel (NIH/OD) [E]

From: OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)
Sent: Friday, February 18, 2022 10:30 AM
To: (b) (6)
Cc: OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)
Subject: RE: Incident Report- PHS assurance #D16-00318

Thank you for this report, (b) (6) We will send a response soon.

Axel Wolff, M.S., D.V.M.
Deputy Director, OLAW

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, February 18, 2022 10:00 AM
To: OLAW-DOA Annual Reports (NIH/OD) <olawarp@od.nih.gov>
Cc: accredit@aaalac.org; animalcare@usda.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Incident Report- PHS assurance #D16-00318

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Dr. Axel Wolff, Deputy Director
OLAW
olawdco@mail.nih.gov

Dear Dr. Wolff:

On behalf of our Institutional Official, Dr. David Amberg, I am submitting the attached incident report involving animals used in research at SUNY Upstate Medical University. Our PHS Assurance number is D16-00318.

Please contact us if you need additional information.

Respectfully,

(b) (6)